I fall in love too easily....

. . . that's the title of a song The Bee Gees *didn't* write, but it fits Maurice Gibb perfectly. For he admits he does just that. But when you're young and alive, can it be wrong?

MAURICE GIBB was all set for the Bahamas, when I saw him last. Dreaming, no doubt, of sun-kissed shores and foam-tipped waves under azure skies?

"Well, not exactly. I'm looking forward to the girls, actually," he said. "Just line 'em up, baby!"

Maurice can be as flip about girls as the next unclaimed bachelor, but it doesn't take long to see through him. He's hopelessly romantic.

"I take out different girls all the time. There's no point in taking out the same girl regularly. Let's face it, I lose them anyway."

He said it with a smile, but it was a wry little smile. Twice he's loved and lost a girl, and now he's wary about becoming involved. There's no bitterness in Maurice, but he's made up his mind not to get hurt again. The trouble is that the mind doesn't always know what the heart is doing.

"My first big love was in Australia," he said. "She was a very successful singer called Little Patti. They called her 'Little' because she was only thirteen at the time! I was fourteen, and I suppose what we had was puppy love, but it was nice.

"I'm only eighteen now, but in this business you grow up fast. You're old before your time. And the two things fight in me . . . I know I'm too young to get involved with someone—it would be silly really to take on that responsibility yet—but if you fall in love, I think it's right that you should marry. I never mean to get involved with a girl, but then I go away and soon I'm missing her and I know it's serious. I just let it sort itself out."

When Maurice and Lulu became friends, the situation was sorted out for them. Lulu went to America, where she was seen around with Davy Jones, and somehow a Sunday newspaper gave the impression that it was all over between Lulu and Maurice. There were rows over the Trans-atlantic 'phone. Lulu, naturally, objected to her private life being publicised; Maurice was angry that she could believe he had encouraged it.

Months later, they still haven't seen each other again.

"I suppose we'll meet some time," he said. "We can't avoid each other for ever. But it could never be the same. We couldn't meet and have dinner without the whole business starting up again . . . everyone watches you in this business, and it would be in the papers in no time, and we'd be back where we started.

"Davy Jones? I like him a lot, and I'm pleased for him if he loves Lu. He's got a wonderful girl. The nicest girl I've ever known."

Maurice and Lulu were close for seven months.

"Those seven months, we were confused but very happy," he said. "It was like a huge holiday for us. She's a very happy person, very natural and straight. Every time we went out it would be something ordinary like the movies or dinner, and we never talked about pop. We never did anything wild, but it was the happiest time of my life. I think we knew it couldn't last. It was too public from the start. But I'll never forget her."

NOW people talk about Maurice and Hungarian singer Sarolta.

"Sarolta is very nice, but her English is—shall we say—limited. It's a bit of a bring-down when you whisper sweet nothings into someone's ear, and they don't know what you're on about. I think 'sweet nothings' are nice, don't you?"

ANOTHER showbiz girl whose name has been mentioned in the same gossip columns as Maurice's is Tiger, of the Paper Dolls. He says he's only really met her once.

"But I found out she lives up to her name," he said, that honest, open face all a-grin.

Maurice's little black book isn't stuffed with telephone numbers from showbiz girls. He rather likes to get away from all that when he isn't working.

"I don't like being flash," he said. "And when I do try, it never comes off. I bought a brand-new Aston Martin DB6 once, and rushed over in it to pick up a girl at her place. When she was nicely impressed by it all, I tried to start the engine. Nothing happened. Absolutely nothing."

The car has been happening ever since. Usually, the engine catches fire. It once happened right outside his manager's flat, and he and the other Bee Gees had to keep on running backwards and forwards with buckets of water to put it out!

"Being flash isn't me," he admitted. "I'm terribly romantic . . . all for country walks, and holding hands, and Trafalgar Square in the moonlight. I would hate to send a girl home knowing she hadn't enjoyed herself. I like to do the right thing.

"I don't like the Rolls and Champagne scene, although I could offer a girl that. But the sort of girl who likes you to show off isn't the sort of girl I enjoy being with . . . she's the sort who would say 'Look at me, I'm with a singer'. I like a girl who appreciates simple things, a happy girl, full of humour, no problems, no hang-ups. I like to take a girl to quiet places, where we can be ourselves.

"I know I could take a girl looning around night-clubs, but I don't think a girl wants that. I think if a girl has said she'll come out with you, she wants to be *with* you."

ONE girl who wanted to be with him was Ingrid, a beauty he met three months ago in Germany, who suddenly turned up to see him at The Royal Albert Hall, complete with three suitcases.

"I'm here," she said, holding out her arms.

"Yes, I can see that," replied Maurice, and promptly had her driven back to the airport.

"I thought it was pretty big of me," said Maurice. "After all, she had flown over on a first-class ticket—the champagne flight—and charged it up to me!"

Maurice rarely, if ever, 'picks up' a girl. They usually find him, and you can see why. He has a soft face, fresh and alive, and a smile that is slow to die.

He's most girls' dream of the boy they'd most like to fall in love with.

"I suppose I'm a romantic," he said. "But to me love is a flower. If you treat it with care, it will bloom. It will be the biggest and most beautiful bloom if you say the right words and take care not to crush it."

JUNE SOUTHWORTH